REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the non-final Office Action mailed March 28, 2006. Upon entry of the amendments in this response, claims 1 – 19 and 21 are pending. In particular, Applicants have amended claims 8 and 19, added claim 21 and has canceled claim 20 without prejudice, waiver, or disclaimer. Reconsideration and allowance of the application and presently pending claims are respectfully requested.

I. Indication of Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 2 – 7 and 10 - 19 "would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims." (Office Action, pg. 3).

However, claims 2 – 7 and 10 - 19 have not been rewritten in independent form for at least the reason that the Applicants believe that independent claim 1, from which claims 2 – 7 and 10 - 19 depend, is allowable.

II. The Rejection of Claim 20 as Not Being in Compliance with 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph is Moot

The Office Action rejects claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. For at least the reason that claim 20 has been canceled, the rejection is moot.

III. Claims 1, 8, and 9 are Patentable Over *Park* and *Chen*

A. The *Park* Reference

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 8, and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,513,420 to Park ("*Park*"). For at least the reasons set forth below, the rejection should be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

Applicants submit that the instant Application claims priority to PCT Application Number PCT/FR03/00756, filed on March 10, 2003, which claims priority to a French Patent Application No. 02/03089 filed on March 8, 2002. *Park*, on the other hand, has a filing date of April 12, 2002, and was published February 4, 2003, with no apparent claim to domestic or foreign priority. Thus, neither the filing date nor the publication date occur before Applicants' priority date of March 8, 2002. Accordingly, Applicants submit that *Park* is not a proper 102(a) reference and claims 1, 8 and 9 are allowable over *Park* for at least this reason, among others.

B. The *Chen* Reference

The Office Action further rejects claims 1, 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,257,124 to Chen ("*Chen*"). For at least the reasons set forth below, the rejection should be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

Independent Claim 1

Independent claim 1 as amended, recites:

> 1. An appliance for cooking food under pressure, the appliance comprising:
> a vessel and a lid for being fitted and locked on said vessel in order to form a leaktight cooking enclosure;
> at least one jaw for locking the lid relative to the vessel;
> means for driving said at least one jaw between a locking position and an unlocking position; and
> ***a module for fitting on and releasably securing to the lid, said module including a device for controlling locking and unlocking of the lid relative to the vessel.***

(*Emphasis Added*). Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 patently defines over *Chen* for at least the reason that *Chen* fails to disclose, teach or suggest the features emphasized in bold text above.

For example, *Chen* does not disclose, teach, or suggest at least the feature of "***a module for fitting on and releasably securing to the lid, said module including a device for controlling locking and unlocking of the lid relative to the vessel***" as recited in claim 1. The Office Action apparently alleges, at page 3, that the knob 32 and fixed frame 36 of *Chen* disclose the emphasized feature. However, at most, even assuming, *arguendo*, that the knob 32 and fixed frame 36 of *Chen* controls locking and unlocking of the lid (a point which Applicants contest below), *Chen* discloses that a control device 30 comprises "at least two driving arms (31) movable in a radial direction relative to a central axis of the cover (20), a knob (32) pivotally mounted at the central axis of the cover (20), a rotary plate (33) co-axially fixed at a lower end of the knob (32) and being rotatable together with the knob (32), and a fixed frame (36) mounted on the body (21) above the rotary plate (33) and the driving arms (31)." (Col. 3, lines 6 – 13). Thus, both the knob 32 and the fixed frame 36 are not for "fitting on and releasably securing to the lid." Rather, both of the knob 32 and fixed frame 36 are mounted to the cover. The disclosure in *Chen* that part 36 is a "fixed frame" also excludes its releasability.

Further, contrary to the allegation in the Office Action at page 2, line 10, Figure 2 is not intended to teach that the alleged "module (32, 36)" is releasable. As disclosed at col. 2, line 36, of *Chen*, Figure 2 is "an exploded perspective view of the pressure vessel." As defined by dictionary.com (citing the American Heritage Dictionary, Fourth Edition), an exploded view is "an illustration or diagram of a construction that shows its parts separately but in positions that indicate their proper relationships to the whole." Thus, knob 32 and fixed frame 36 are not depicted separately from the cover 20 or cover

body 21 in Figure 2 because they are releasable, but only because Figure 2 is an exploded view.

Additionally, even assuming, *arguendo*, that knob 32 and fixed frame 36 are releasable (which Applicants strongly disagree that *Chen* discloses), Applicants disagree that knob 32 and fixed frame 36 even comprise "a device for controlling locking and unlocking of the lid relative to the vessel" as recited in claim 1. For example, part 36 is only a passive frame that forms a guide for the jaw arms.

Rather, Applicants submit that the device for controlling locking and unlocking of the cover 20 of *Chen* comprises the rotary plate 33. Rotary plate 33 is interposed between the cover body 21 and the fixed frame 36 and thus is also not releasable (nor is it shown as releasable in Fig. 2).

Regardless, the removal of the frame 36 and/or the plate 33 would lead to a complete dismantling of the *Chen* apparatus, since the relevant parts are maintained in position by the frame 36. This clearly shows that the appliance of *Chen* is not based on a "modular" concept like the invention, but rather on an "integral" concept. Applicants submit that *Chen* is not even relevant to the features of claim 1. Rather, the non-modular concepts of *Chen* were designed for the primary purpose of reducing complication, increasing reliability and being more ergonometric than its comparable designs.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 does not disclose, teach, or suggest at least the feature of "a module for fitting on and releasably securing to the lid, said module including a device for controlling locking and unlocking of the lid relative to the vessel," and the rejection should be withdrawn and the claim allowed for at least this reason. Furthermore, because claim 1 is believed to be allowable, dependent claims 2 – 19 are

allowable for at least the same reasons.

Dependent Claims 8 and 9

Applicants submit that the §102 rejection to dependent claims 8 and 9 is rendered moot in light of any of the arguments made above and, therefore, claims 8 and 9 are allowable as a matter of law for at least the reason that claims 8 and 9 contain all the features and elements of their corresponding independent claim.

IV. Newly Added Claim 21 is Patentable Over *Chen*

Applicant submits that newly added claim 21 is patentable over *Chen* for at least the reason that *Chen* does not disclose, teach, or suggest "a device for controlling locking and unlocking of a lid relative to a vessel of an appliance for cooking food under pressure, the module configured to fit on and releasably secure to the lid" as recited in claim 21.

CONCLUSION

The Applicant respectfully submits that all claims are now in condition for allowance, and requests that the Examiner pass this application to issuance. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (770) 933-9500.

No fee is believed to be due in connection with this response. If, however, any fee is deemed to be payable, you are hereby authorized to charge any such fee to Deposit Account No. 20-0778.

Respectfully submitted,

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